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ABSTRACT

This Action Research Project implemented a program for improving human relation skills intended to raise the academic performance level of students. The target population consists of kindergarten, seventh grade (regular/at-risk), and high school (regular/behavior disordered) students. Analysis of both research literature and problem evidence indicated that human relation skills at all grade levels affect students' academic performance. A review of student/teacher surveys suggested that human relation skills should be an integral part of the curriculum across grade levels if academic achievement is to be improved. Solution strategies included a developmental program to enhance human relation skills. The framework for this solution component is applying Glasser's Control Theory and R.W. Begun's "Ready-To-Use Social Skills Lessons and Activities" to maximize behavioral learning opportunities and academic achievement. Results of the project are reported; conclusions and recommendations are presented. The surveys, survey results, negative behavior checklist, and data on grade averages are appended. (Contains 16 references.) (Author/EMK)

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IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMPROVING HUMAN RELATION SKILLS AND LEVELS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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Abstract

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Analysis of both research literature and problem evidence indicated that human relation skills at all grade levels affect students' academic performance. A review of student/teacher surveys suggested that human relation skills should be an integral part of the curriculum across grade levels if academic achievement is to be improved.

Solution strategies included a developmental program to enhance human relation skills. The framework for this solution component is applying Dr. Glasser's Control Theory and Ruth Weltmann Begun's Ready-to-Use Social Skills Lessons & Activities to maximize behavioral learning opportunities and academic achievement.

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Chapter One

Problem Statement

Students' academic achievement may be affected by their level of development of human relation skills across a wide range of grade levels as evidenced by direct teacher observations, specific strategies implemented within the classroom, test scores, and report card grades.

School Setting

This study employed students from four separate school districts, representing the communities of Oak Lawn, Alsip, Merrionette Park, Garden Homes, Evergreen Park, Chicago Heights, Steger, Sauk Village, Ford Heights, Lynwood, and Lemont. A wide range of age/grade levels and abilities were represented within the target population. Some characteristics for participating grades are as follows:

-- Kindergarten: 24 students/ages 5 and 6/heterogeneously grouped.

-- Seventh grade regular education: 25 students/ages 12 and 13/Language Arts/heterogeneously grouped.

-- Seventh grade at-risk education: 20 students/ages 12 and 13/Social Studies/heterogeneously grouped.

-- High school:

Behavior disordered: 22 students/ages 14 to 19/9th, 11th, and 12th grades/heterogeneously grouped.

Cooperative Vocational Education (CVE): 30 students/ages 16 to 18/11th and 12th grades/work-related program/heterogeneously grouped.

Pertinent data for all schools and students follow.

The kindergarten students are enrolled at Lawn Manor Primary Center located in Oak Lawn. The school consists of pre-kindergarten through second grade with a total enrollment of 276 students. The racial/ethnic background consists of 87.0 percent White, 6.2 percent Hispanic, 2.9 percent Asian, 0.4 percent Native American, and 3.6 percent Black. Low-income students are 5.8 percent of the population, and there are no limited-English-proficient students. In the school, the daily attendance rate is 95.1 percent, student mobility is 16.9 percent, and chronic truancy is 0.0 percent.

Within Lawn Manor Primary District 125, the average teaching experience is 13.6 years. Teachers with Bachelor's degrees are 57.6 percent of the population, and teachers with Master's degrees and above are 42.4 percent of the population. The pupil-teacher ratio is 19.0:1. The average teacher salary is $39,397, and the average administrator salary is $68,898. The operating expenditure per pupil is $5,469 (School District 125 Report Card, 1996).

The seventh grade students are enrolled at Central Junior High School located in Evergreen Park. The school consists of seventh and eighth grades with a total enrollment of 385 students. The racial/ethnic background consists of 94.0 percent White, 2.1 percent Hispanic, 2.4 percent Asian, 0.0 percent Native American, and 1.6 percent Black. Low-income students are 12.3 percent of the population, and there are 2.1 percent limited-English-proficient students. In the school, the daily attendance rate is 94.0 percent, student mobility is 16.2 percent, and chronic truancy is 0.0 percent.

Within Evergreen Park School District 124, the average teaching experience is 11.1 years. Teachers with Bachelor's degrees are 32.6 percent of the population, and teachers with Master's degrees and above are 67.4 percent of the population. The pupil-teacher ratio is 20.3:1. The

average teacher salary is $36,403. The operating expenditure per pupil is $5,381 (Central Junior High School Report Card, 1996).

Bloom Trail High School in District 206 has an enrollment of 1520 students in grades nine through twelve. The student population is 51.7 percent White, 37.3 percent Black, 9.5 percent Hispanic, 0.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.0 percent Native American. Low-income families comprise 26.9 percent of the student population. Limited-English-proficient students are 0.1 percent of the student population. The attendance rate in this school is 88.2 percent. Student mobility is 21.0 percent, and dropouts are 8.2 percent. The graduation rate at Bloom Trial is 70.6 percent (Bloom Trail High School Report Card, 1996).

At Bloom Trail, the average teaching experience is 18.6 years. Approximately 65 percent of the teachers have a Master's degree or above. The average class size is 22.6 students in regular education classes compared to an average of 15 in special education classes. Within the district the pupil-teacher ratios is 25.3:1, and the operating expenditure per student is $9,850 (Bloom Trail High School Report Card, 1996).

The Behavior Disorder Program at Bloom Trail is appropriate for students who have been identified as behavior disorder through a case study evaluation and require more support and structure than can be provided in a full-time mainstream program. Individualized academics and a behavior management system are an integral part of this program.

The CVE eleventh and twelfth grade students are enrolled at Lemont High School located in Lemont. The total enrollment at the high school/district is 781 students. The racial/ethnic background of the students consists of 96.9 percent White, 1.9 percent Hispanic, 1.0 percent Asian, and 0.0 percent Black, and 0.1 percent Native American. Low-income students are 2.4 percent of the population, and limited-English-proficient students are 0.9 percent of the population. In the

school, the daily attendance rate is 93.6 percent, student mobility rate is 7.0 percent, and chronic truancy is 1.6 percent (Lemont High School Report Card, 1996).

Within Lemont High School District 210, the average teaching experience is 11.5 years. Teachers with Bachelor's degrees are 46.9 percent of the population, and teachers with Master's degrees and above are 53.1 percent of the population. The pupil-teacher ratio is 18.2:1. The average teacher salary is $47,683. The operating expenditure per pupil is $7,470 (Lemont High School Report Card, 1996).

Community Setting

School District 125 services parts of Oak Lawn, Alsip, Merrionnette Park, and Garden Homes. The population, household income, and unemployment rate in these communities is similar.

The Village of Evergreen Park has a total of 20,874 (53.3 percent female and 46.8 percent male). The percent of the population, which is made up of school age children (0-17 years of age), is 23.5 percent. The average household income is $43,075. The unemployment is 3.7 percent, with 83.3 percent of the population graduating from high school, and 21.9 percent graduating from college.

The total mobility within Evergreen Park is 7.1 percent. There is a projected increase in enrollment for the five schools (Southwest School, Southeast School, Northwest School, Northeast School, and Central Junior High School) in Evergreen Park School District 124 over the next five years (Cook County, Illinois Census, 1990).

Bloom Trail serves the communities of Steger, Sauk Village, Ford Heights, Lynwood, and outlying rural areas. The communities are located in the southeast section of Cook County, 28 miles from the center of Chicago.

The truancy rate in this district is a serious concern. Currently, it is 15.1 percent compared to only 2.3 percent for the state. Failed referendums to increase local funding were defeated by voters in the communities. The district is now faced with financial difficulties (Bloom Trail High School Report Card, 1996).

Lemont High School serves an area of over 31 square miles located in the southwest suburban Chicagoland area. Approximately 12,000 persons reside in the growing High School District, which is comprised of Lemont Township, Cook County, and the south portions of Downers Grove Township, DuPage County. The single municipality located within the High School District is the Village of Lemont. The Argonne National Research Laboratory is also located within the boundaries of the school district. The area is noted for its rolling hills, forested landscapes and predominantly residential development (Lemont High School District 210 Report Card, 1996).

There is a projected increase in enrollment at Lemont High School of 781 students in 1996 to 1600 students by the year 2009. A bond issue proposition referendum was passed on March 19, 1996 to meet the building needs of the present and future district students.

National Context

During the research process of exploring the relationship between human relation skills and academic performance, numerous citations justified the evidence of the problem statement. The following sources indicate the scope of the problem.

Alber and Heward (1996) discuss principles of "behavior traps" used to lure students into "success circles" in "GOTCHA!" Twenty-Five Behavior Traps Guaranteed to Extend Your Students' Academic and Social Skills. Examples include "incorporating student interests in heroes, special interests, and clubs into curricular activities; utilizing school/community resources; and

turning around annoying classroom behaviors" (Alber and Heward, Intervention in School and Clinic, May 1996, p. 285-89).

"Concern for disruptive behavior in the classroom has been an ongoing issue at the local, state, and national level. The report describes a program for improving behavior and academic success through a caring classroom." (Improving Behavior and Academic Success through a Caring Classroom, Lindmark, 1996, p. 171). Several strategies were applied to determine the effect of disruptive behavior and academic success. This study was conducted with elementary students at three different schools. Per the study, it was found that post data "indicated a decrease in disruptive behavior and an increase in academic success" (Lindmark, 1996).

A Chicago Tribune article, "Teaching Values May Join 3 R's," describes a program incorporating values education in the curriculum. The article looks at both sides of an old argument, "Should values be taught in the classroom?" According to the article, "some education leaders caution that the plan will have little impact without adequate teacher training" (Breslin, April 6, 1997, p. 1).

"Do school factors such as teacher perception, student perception, and factors measured by the Learning Skills Checklist contribute to success in school? Results indicate that behaviors related to conforming to school requirements tend to produce a high level of academic achievement" (The Relationship of Social Skills to Academic Achievement, Wilson, 1995, p. 8-11).

A Chicago Sun-Times article, " 'Golden Rule' rules at Moline school," discusses a program called PeaceBuilders. The program is being implemented at Washington Elementary School, in Moline, Illinois. "The program encourages participants to praise people, refrain from putting people down, seek wise people as friends and advisers, and rectify wrongs" (Associated Press,

March 31, 1997). Tuscon, Arizona, psychologist Dennis Embry and businessman Michael Krupnick, began PeaceBuilders a few years ago.

These findings suggest that the problem is nationwide as well as regional. Further research may suggest strategies to improve academic performance by focusing on human relation skills in the classroom.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

Based on research findings and survey data, there is a need to implement human relation skills in the classroom across grade levels. Traditional educational practices do not ordinarily address the teaching of these skills. To examine the extent to which this problem affects students' academic performance, 24 students in kindergarten, 25 regular education seventh grade students, 20 at-risk seventh grade students, 22 behavior disordered high school students, and 30 Cooperative Vocational Education 11th and 12th grade students were given a pilot survey in April 1997 to ascertain to what degree students believe that human relation skills are a factor in academic success. Additional evidence was observed by teachers who recognized in recent years an increase in weak human relation skills among students at the stated grade levels.

The result of a pilot student survey indicated that human relation skills at all grade levels could affect students' academic performance. For the most part, students responded positively to the survey regarding listening skills, teacher/student rapport, family issues, and classroom/school rules as important factors which insure a classroom climate appropriate for academic achievement. Of the students polled, 86% stated that a mutual respect among teachers and students was an important component for classroom success (Appendix C). It must be noted that most students stated that human relation skills should be an integral part of the curriculum across all grade levels. Half of the seventh grade students and the CVE high school students responded positively to taking a course in human relation skills (Appendix A/B).

Probable Cause

As evidenced by the four targeted school districts, the lack of human relation skills is believed to directly influence levels of academic achievement in students. At Lawn Manor school, the student body make-up includes areas of high mobility, low income, and latchkey kids. The combination of these three factors is a major contributor to poor social skills and low academic achievement. Within Central Junior High School and Lemont High School there are diverse levels of socio-economic status within the community, influencing academic success. Some of the negative, contributing factors at Bloom Trail High School are the truancy rate, gangs, low-income families, and single parent homes (see p. 4, Chapter 1).

Due to low socio-economic levels, poor parenting skills, minimal parental supervision, and negative peer pressure within our districts, the major objectives of the proposed teaching strategies are to: 1) build students' self-esteem; 2) increase self-control and respect for the rights of others; and, 3) develop a sense of responsibility for one's own actions. A secondary, but important objective is to teach students to settle grievances and conflicts through communication without recourse to violence. The belief is that such training can be effective and successful by increasing self- discipline and reducing the dropout rate. Thus, students will benefit from social skills training throughout their lives (Begun, Ruth Weltmann, 1996).

McGonigal (1994) implemented a program for increasing student effort and achievement through the use of social skill strategies. He found many students to be unmotivated, to demonstrate minimal academic effort, and who earned poor grades. Analysis of the probable causes of this situation revealed low levels of self-esteem and poor social skills resulting in increased student apathy and truancy. In addition, it was suspected that a lack of parental involvement, a lack of responsibility at home, and a lack of English language skills were

contributing factors to poor motivation. Solution strategies implemented to alleviate the problem included the use of cooperative groups, increased individual assistance by the teacher, extrinsic rewards for oral responses, and a varied teaching approach to maintain student interest. These strategies were found to help improve social skills and help increase student motivation.

Melby and Conger (1996) stated that the school setting and positively reinforcing appropriate behavioral standards increased academic performance, whereas student hostility decreased performance.

Low self-esteem frequently impedes students' academic achievement. Activities that incorporate cooperative learning, parental involvement, and counseling for students help to build social skills. Instructional strategies, which are designed to target these students, allowed them to use individual interests and learning styles for academic achievement--a strategy that has proven effective. Typical strategies that have been employed were giving students with poor social skills leading roles in class plays, involving all parents in the classroom (rather than just the guardians of the study participants), and developing class cooperative groups to build these skills. Results indicated that classroom behavior, attendance, and academic achievement improved. Parent involvement was critical in developing better human relation skills for some students. (Tanksley, Mary D., 1994)

James P. Raffini (1988) observed that some current educational practices actually contribute to students' apathy. These include a perceptual view of behavior, the view that self-worth equals achievement, norm-referenced evaluation, and success equated to ability and effort. Four strategies which have the potential for allowing students to experience success from reasonable levels of effort include: (1) individual goal-setting structures that allow students to define their own criteria for success; (2) outcome-based instruction and evaluation which make it possible for slower

students to experience success without having to compete with faster students; (3) attribution retraining which can help apathetic students view failure as a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability; and (4) cooperative learning activities which help students realize that personal effort can contribute to group as well as individual goals. Educators must confront discrepancies between the actual and stated goals of education. Students have the power to choose how much effort to expend on any task. If the goal is to differentiate students according to their ability, then slower students will choose to reject school by avoiding effort. For those students who are forced to choose between rejecting schooling or rejecting their sense of self-worth, time is short.

According to Bean (1992), strong self-esteem can be attained only when children experience positive feelings within four conditions of self-esteem: Connectiveness, Uniqueness, Power, and Models. These conditions should be incorporated into the existing school curriculum. Planning or implementing social skills in a revision of discipline and classroom procedures was found to be crucial in improving negative behavior.

Letts (1994) discusses the practice of using consensus-building techniques to promote prosocial behavior and scholarship skills. Teachers can allow numerous students to raise their hand before calling on one, thus encouraging greater participation, and have students discuss problems among themselves and work out solutions. Letts argues that prosocial skills and academic skills are vital ingredients to promote children's prosocial behavior.

A program designed by Vicki Bever (1994) was constructed as a way to increase academic productivity in students. She hoped that by increasing students' organizational skills, using and teaching motivational techniques to students, along with incorporating various other educational strategies in the classroom, overall academic success would be elevated. Bever's 20-week program was successful. Student motivation increased, parental involvement rose, student study skills were

elevated and student behavior improved. Her theory for academic success showed that improving social skills directly influenced academic achievement.

According to Begun (1996), today's educators carry added responsibilities because significant social changes have had an impact on human relations. Family ties have been loosened, the number of single-parent families has grown, and stresses in many families are often high. Moreover, television frequently shows events not suitable for children. Unless schools, daycare centers, head start programs, and parents counteract asocial influences starting at the pre-kindergarten level, poor interpersonal skills will be an increasing problem. One objective is to teach students to settle conflicts through communication using appropriate social skills. Such training can be effective and successful by increasing self-discipline and reducing the dropout rate. Thus, students will benefit from social skills training throughout their lives.

Chapter Three

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

According to Diane Berreth and Sheldon Berman, "We can help children develop social skills and moral values through modeling, direct instruction, experience, and continual practice." (The Moral Dimensions of Schools, 1997, p. 25). The authors feel that children today face a challenging social environment because of the increasing acceptance of violence and abuse nationwide. Such feelings leave children unable to help or trust others undermining their possibilities for a successful future. Being exposed to the many facets of violence in today's society, children are becoming desensitized to their own pain and that of others.

Berreth and Berman consider character building essential to promoting social responsibility and values in children. When children see that they can make a positive difference in the classroom by showing respect and empathy to others, they can add value and meaning to their own lives.

"Social skills instruction can have a long-term positive effect on students' interactions with others, on their attitudes toward school, and on their academic achievement." (Raising Healthy Children, Cummings and Haggerty, 1997, p. 28). The first step for helping students to solve conflicts with others is to calm down and tell the other person what the problem is. Next, listen to the other person describe the problem and work out a solution acceptable to both. Finally, as a last resort, children may ask an adult for help. This process enables students to use peaceful measures for conflict resolution rather than resorting to violence.

In Creating a Districtwide Social Development Project, authors Weissberg, Shriver, Bose, and DeFalco (1996) believe that a curriculum that implements problem solving, conflict

resolution, and communication skills will foster a positive environment in the classroom. This concept is being utilized by "The New Haven Social Development Project." This districtwide project includes school-based prevention programs that promote positive youth development by addressing children's social, emotional, and physical health.

According to Gerri Holden (1990), in the article Changing the Way Kids Settle Conflicts, "By using the Students Against Violence program, teachers can help children deal with their own-and others'-disagreements in positive ways."...(There are many approaches to discipline)... "They can't do it all."...(Not all severe behavior problems can be solved in the classroom.)... "It takes time for behavior to change; learning takes place only through repetition."...(Frustration occurs when teachers want to see immediate results.)... "The ability to see the other person's point of view is difficult for adults as well as children."...(This is mainly an adult skill and may be very difficult for children to grasp.)... "Violent behavior may have any number of causes, and in a specific incident, we may not know what the student is thinking."...(Teachers need to be observant and aware of their students' moods.)... "Conflict is unavoidable."...(Students face conflict every day. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach good conflict resolution skills.)... "Remember that every conflict is not serious, so don't overreact."...(The main focus should be to eliminate the violent behavior and manage the rest.)... "Adults must model ways of handling conflicts peacefully and compliment children who are doing so as well."...(Teachers need to take every opportunity to praise children when they settle their conflicts peacefully. Once children are taught conflict resolution skills, teachers can become observers rather than participants.)

Even though the problem of violence begins in elementary school, intervention usually does not occur until middle school or high school. According to a study by Brendro and Long,

1995, "40 percent of childhood bullies will become adult felons." A curriculum is needed to help these students, but as Johnson and Johnson (1995) point out,

> "Teaching students the procedures and skills they need to resolve conflicts constructively has been relatively ignored...despite considerable research evidence indicating that the constructive management of conflict increases classroom productivity."

The first step in creating this curriculum is ensuring children's safety in the classroom. Another essential component of this program is a sense of belonging. Therefore, both a program such as, "Students Against Violence Club," and children creating their own classroom rules will fill that need.

Ruth Weltmann Begun created a ready-to-use program based on integrating social skills activities into the daily curriculum. These activities are based on situations that help build children's self-esteem, self-control, respect for others, and accepting responsibility for their own actions. Begun's philosophy is "... that the learning of social skills is the foundation for social and academic adequacy. Social behavior and academic behavior are highly correlated." She believes "...that it is more productive to teach children the proper ways to behave than to admonish them for improper behavior." This social skills curriculum is based on her beliefs.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

After careful consideration, Begun's Social Skills Lessons & Activities was chosen as the focus for this research project. Lessons were implemented over a period of nine weeks and addressed the following social skills: Listening, Respect for Others, Self-Control, Problem-Solving, Dealing with Peer Pressure and Feelings. The targeted group for this research project was kindergarten, seventh grade, and high school.

Methods of Assessment

The initial assessments used to determine whether a problem existed were, Pilot Student Survey (Appendices A and B), Negative Behavior Checklist (Appendix F), and Teacher Survey (Appendix E). The results of these surveys suggested that social skills would be beneficial to students if added and integrated into the current curriculum.

The lessons in this curriculum were designed to be flexible. The length of the average lesson taught was 20-30 minutes. Constant reinforcement of social skills through modeling and role-playing by both teacher and student was presented throughout the week. Each lesson was directed to a specific targeted behavior, which was defined and stated in observable terms. As students progressed in using social skills, teachers became observers rather than instructors. This direct observation became a method of assessment. Negative Behavior Checklist (Appendix E), a Post Student Survey, (Appendix I) was given after the nine-week period assessing the success of these lessons.

Chapter Four

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase human relation skills with the intent of finding a link between improvement of academic performance through the teaching of social skills. The implementation of Ruth Weltman Begun's Ready-to-Use Social Skills Lessons & Activities was selected to effect the desired changes.

Various social skills lessons appropriate to each grade level were implemented into the curriculum for twenty to thirty minutes, two to three times a week for a period of nine weeks during the second quarter of the school year. This time period was chosen to give teachers adequate time to observe classroom behavior and to complete a teacher survey (Appendix E). Based on this survey, the social skills needed to be addressed were: poor listening, impulsiveness, self-control, disrespect toward self and others, and lack of preparedness. (Appendix F)

Every opportunity was used to reinforce, model and coach students to practice these skills on a daily basis. The four basic components included in the lessons were: modeling, role-playing, discussion, and application to real life situations. The teacher also modeled social skills strategies in all interactions with the intent of helping students feel comfortable using these strategies throughout the school day.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

To determine whether there was a relationship between improved human relation skills and academic performance the students in kindergarten (pre-survey only), seventh, ninth, eleventh, and twelfth grades completed student surveys on social skills before and

after the interventions. (Appendices A and B) The pre-survey results (Appendix C), found that 63 percent of junior high and high school students had difficulty focusing on class work because of disruption by other students in class; 66 percent of the students had difficulty concentrating in class due to personal problems experienced before school, as well as reduced concentration when having conflicts with teachers. Of the students surveyed, 58 percent felt that liking a teacher affects how well they learn in class. If rules are enforced consistently in the classroom and throughout the school, between 58 and 60 percent of these students felt more successful in their classes. The survey found that 49 percent of the students indicated that rude classmates negatively affected their schoolwork. Between 76 and 86 percent of the students felt that mutual respect among students and teachers was important for success. In answering the question regarding a need for teaching social skills and a willingness to participate in a human relations course, 58 percent found a need for this course, and 51 percent agreed to participate.

According to the kindergarten pre-survey (Appendix D), 74 percent of the students found it difficult to complete class work with classroom disruptions; 48 percent also agreed that it was harder to concentrate if the day was started with problems arising at home. The survey found that 65 percent of the students found it difficult to work if they were having problems with a teacher, while 61 percent agreed that rude classmates also made it difficult for them to complete class work. A preponderance of students (83 percent) felt that it was important to be taught social skills.

Of the teachers surveyed (Appendix E), 63 percent and 61 percent respectively, agreed that students do not consistently listen attentively or follow directions in class (Figure 1, see also Appendix H). The survey found that 36 percent felt that students

exhibited impulsive behavior on a daily basis, and 31 percent felt that they needed to improve their self-control. Only 5 percent surveyed indicated that students caused bodily harm to themselves, yet 21 percent felt that students were disrespectful towards others on a daily basis. Twenty percent found students to be unprepared for class, and 40 percent exhibited poor organizational skills. Twenty-three percent of the teachers surveyed stated that their students earned low grades, while 45 percent agreed low grades were caused by the negative behaviors listed in the survey.

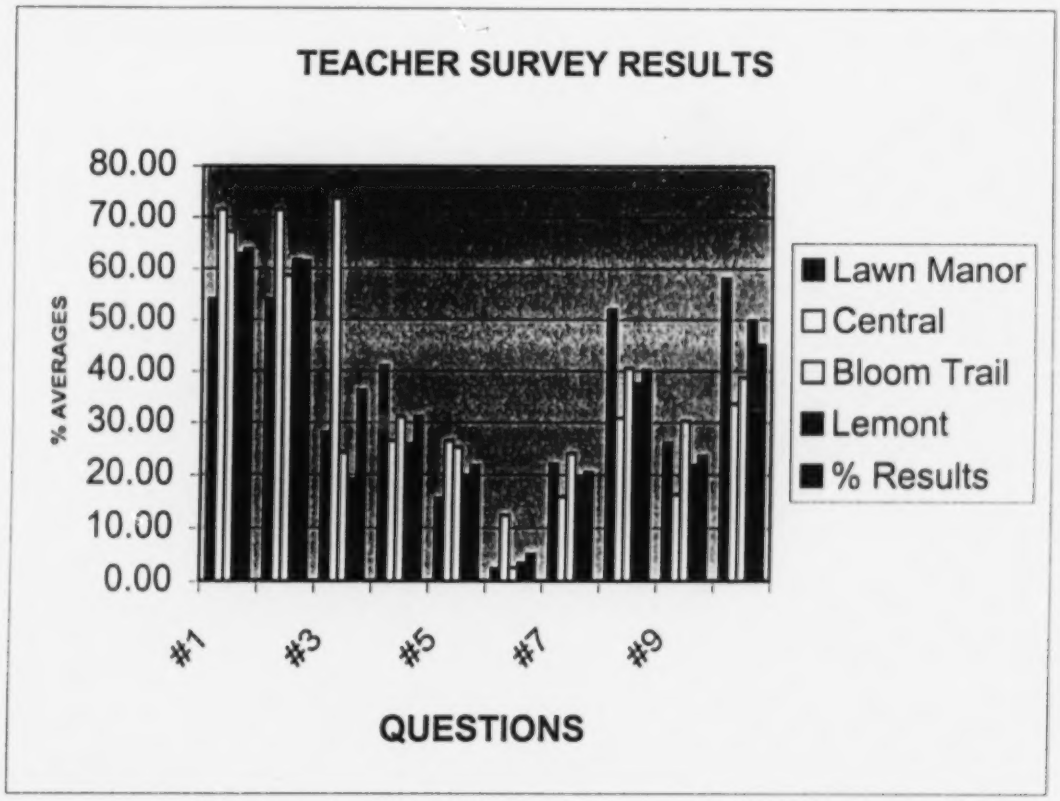

Figure 1: School Averages

According to the post survey (Appendix J), 78 percent of the students found that after the social skills lessons were taught, a decrease in classroom disruption occurred. Seventy-six percent felt that concentration increased, and 69 percent indicated that

learning improved. Over 80 percent of the students felt there was an improvement in their relationship with the teacher, while 76 percent noticed a positive increase in relationships with classmates. Between 76 and 86 percent of the students indicated that classroom and school rules were being consistently enforced. After completing the interventions, 76 percent of students found improved relationships with classmates, however only 59 percent found increased respect among students. A preponderance of students (92 percent) indicated a growth in respect between teachers and students. Three-quarters of the students expressed a desire to participate in a human relation skills course and felt that it should be an integral part of the curriculum.

Part of the analysis of this research project was based on direct teacher's observation of behaviors. Overall, each teacher participating in this study reported a decrease in the occurrences of negative behaviors after the implementation of human relation skills into the curriculum.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the presentation and analysis of the data on human relation skills, there is clear evidence of students' desire to implement these skills into the classroom. Among the grade levels researched, the necessity to teach human relation skills is as important in junior high and high school as it is in kindergarten.

No formal investigation of students' academic performance was proven to be increased. However, based upon results of student surveys and direct teacher observation, the overall improvement of classroom climate very likely enhanced concentration and learning. The kindergarten students showed improvement in their relationships with both classmates and teacher. There were fewer instances of verbal and

physical abuse as well as an increase in problem solving skills. Among the junior high students, it was observed that there was more consideration of other's feelings and less verbal abuse. The students also felt that learning was improved as a result of social skills lessons introduced in the classroom. Of the behavior disordered high school students surveyed, there was an increase in classroom concentration, improved learning, and more respect between teacher and students. Among the Cooperative Vocational Education high school students there was an improvement in classmates' relationships with each other and also the teacher. As a whole, the target group of students expressed an interest to have social skills lessons integrated into the curriculum.

It is the researcher's recommendation that implementation of these skills be an on-going process throughout the students' entire school career, rather than the nine week period for which this action research project was conducted. Although society continues to bombard children with negative social behaviors, the implementation of a curriculum implementing human relation skills throughout their education could enhance their personal and professional lives as adults.

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APPENDICES

(APPENDIX A)

PILOT STUDENT SURVEY

Circle yes or no after you read each question.

1. Is it difficult for you to focus on your class work if someone is talking out loud?
   Yes No

2. If a personal problem occurs before school starts, does it affect your ability to concentrate in class?
   Yes No

3. If you get in trouble with a teacher, does this affect your work in class?
   Yes No

4. In your opinion, does liking a teacher affect how well you learn in class?
   Yes No

5. If the teacher enforces classroom rules consistently, are you more successful in that class?
   Yes No

6. If a classmate is rude to you in class, does it affect your class work?
   Yes No

7. Is it important to you to have mutual respect among students in the classroom?
   Yes No

8. Is it important to you to have mutual respect between teachers and students?
   Yes No

9. Do you feel school rules are consistently enforced throughout the school?
   Yes No

10. Do you think this school needs to teach students appropriate human relation (social) skills?
    Yes No

11. Would you be willing to take a high school course to improve your human relation (social) skills?
    Yes No

(APPENDIX B)

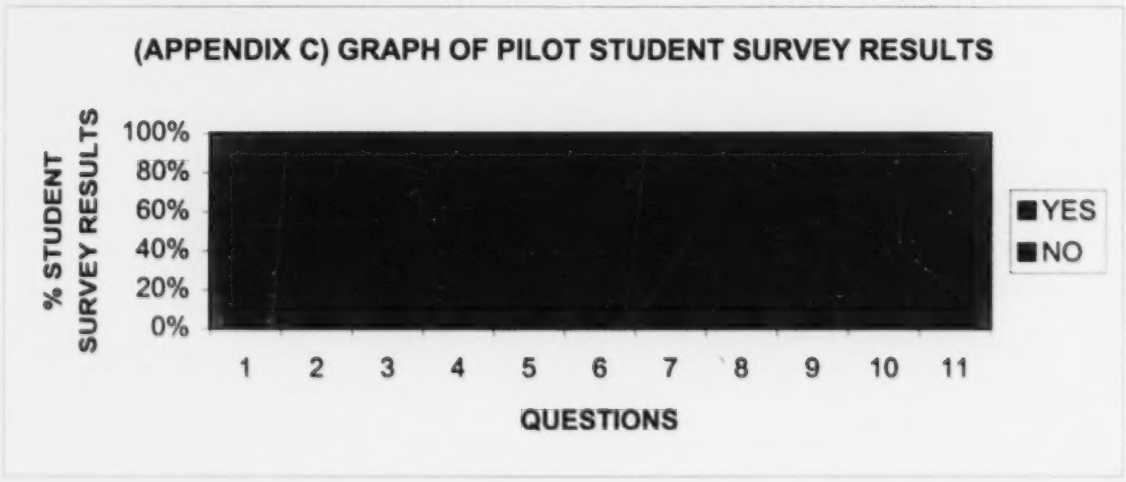
KINDERGARTEN SURVEY

Directions: Read orally to the class. Students are to print either "yes" or "no" on a numbered (1-5) sheet of paper.

1. Is it hard for you to get your schoolwork done if someone is talking outloud in class?
2. If something bad happens at home before you get to school, is it harder for you to get your work done at school?
3. If you get in trouble with a teacher, does this make it harder to do your schoolwork?
4. If someone in your class is not being nice to you, is it harder for you to get your schoolwork done?
5. Do you think we need to be taught how to be nice to each other?

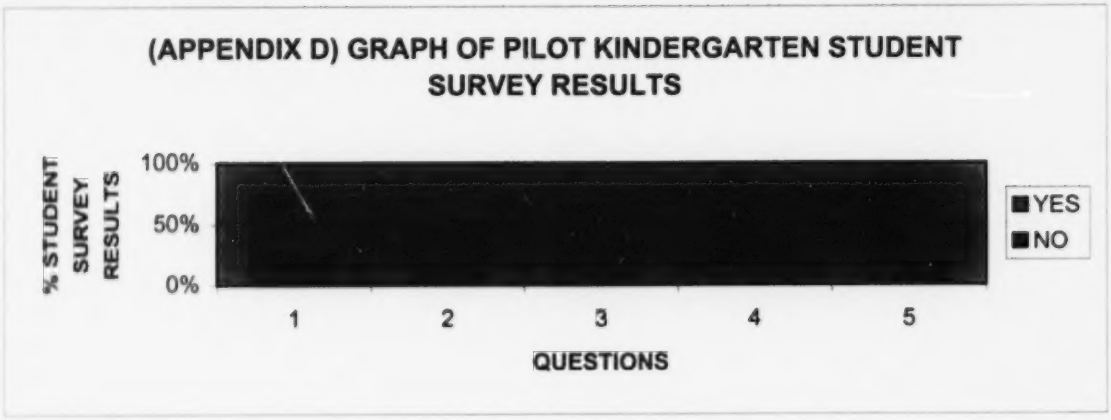
(APPENDIX C)
PILOT STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

	YES	NO
1. Is it difficult for you to focus on your classwork if someone is talking outloud?	63%	37%
2. If a personal problem occurs before school starts, does it affect your ability to concentrate in class?	66%	34%
3. If you get in trouble with a teacher, does this affect your work in class?	66%	34%
4. In your opinion, does liking a teacher affect how well you learn in class?	58%	42%
5. If the teacher enforces classroom rules consistently, are you more successful in that class?	60%	40%
6. If a classmate is rude to you in class, does it affect your classwork?	49%	51%
7. Is it important to you to have mutual respect among students in the classroom?	76%	24%
8. Is it important to you to have mutual respect between teachers and students?	86%	14%
9. Do you feel school rules are consistently enforced throughout the school?	53%	47%
10. Do you think this school needs to teach students appropriate social skills?	58%	42%
11. Would you be willing to take a high school course to improve your human relation (social) skills?	51%	49%



(APPENDIX D)
PILOT KINDERGARTEN STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

	YES	NO
1. Is it hard for you to get your schoolwork done if someone is talking outloud in class?	74%	26%
2. If something bad happens at home before you get to school, is it harder for you to get your work done at school?	48%	52%
3. If you get in trouble with a teacher does this make it harder to do school work?	65%	35%
4. If someone in your class is not being nice to you, is it harder for you to get your schoolwork done?	61%	39%
5. Do you think we need to be taught how to be nice to each other?	83%	17%



(APPENDIX E)

TEACHER SURVEY

The following is a survey that I am asking you to read and complete. This survey is part of my action research project through St. Xavier University & IRI/Skylight Field-Based Master's Program. Thank you for taking time to complete this survey!

Please consider your classes overall when answering the following questions and mark each with a percentage from 0 to 100.

1. What percentage of students listens attentively to directions? _____%
2. What percentage of students follows directions the first time given? _____%
3. What percentage of students exhibits impulsive behavior on a daily basis? _____%
4. What percentage of students needs to improve self-control? _____%
5. What percentage of students displays disrespect towards others on a daily basis? _____%
6. What percentage of students causes bodily harm to themselves? _____%
7. What percentage of students is unprepared for class on a daily basis? _____%
8. What percentage of students has poor organizational skills? _____%
9. What percentage of students earns low grades? _____%
10. In your opinion, what percentage of students earns low grades based on the behaviors listed in numbers 1-8? _____%

(APPENDIX F)
NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

Negative Behaviors	M	T	W	Th	F
1. poor listening skills					
2. impulsiveness					
3. lack of self-control					
4. disrespect to self					
5. disrespect toward others					
6. lack of preparedness					

(APPENDIX G)
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS
LAWN MANOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Questions:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Teacher #										
# 1	50	50	10	40	2	0	20	50	10	10
# 2	50	60	30	50	30	10	30	75	40	75
# 3	60	50	25	30	5	1	10	15	10	75
# 4	70	70	30	40	20	0.5	30	80	30	40
# 5	40	40	45	45	20	0	20	40	40	90
% Average	54.00	54.00	28.00	41.00	15.40	2.30	22.00	52.00	26.00	58.00

(APPENDIX G)
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS
CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Questions:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Teacher #										
#1	90	90	30	50	40	2	10	30	20	15
#2	80	75	5	10	5	0	5	5	5	80
#3	85	85	5	25	25	0	25	50	10	5
#4	70	60	20	30	20	5	15	20	20	20
#5	95	90	2	4	2	0	12	25	15	20
#6	30	30	50	50	50	10	30	70	50	80
#7	90	90	5	5	2	0	10	10	5	5
#8	70	70	3	3	2	0	2	10	9	7
#9	50	50	50	60	10	5	55	80	50	30
#10	40	70	10	40	5	0	20	30	20	15
#11	80	80	10	30	10	0	20	30	20	30
#12	50	60	10	10	25	5	15	25	10	10
#13	90	95	5	100	5	1	5	50	5	100
#14	90	90	5	5	3	1	10	25	3	100
#15	75	75	2	2	2	3	2	10	5	30
#16	75	80	15	10	2	0	30	50	25	23
#17	55	62	15	15	1	0	3	4	4	2
%AVERAGE	71.47	71.47	73.65	26.41	26.41	12.29	15.82	30.82	16.24	33.65

(APPENDIX G)
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS
LEMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Questions:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	- #6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Teacher #										
# 1	60	50	75	10	5	0	25	25	30	90
# 2	60	40	20	50	40	5	20	40	30	25
# 3	70	65	15	20	5	1	25	45	40	75
# 4	75	75	2	5	10	1	30	50	20	20
# 5	70	90	10	20	80	30	10	50	30	20
# 6	20	20	60	90	5	0	20	75	10	80
# 7	90	80	10	10	25	0	5	25	20	100
# 8	98	100	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
# 9	50	50	1	10	5		40	50	25	90
#10	50	20	20	70	40	2	50	60	20	100
#11	80	75	10	10	10	0	75	80	50	50
#12	80	70	2	2	20		5	5	5	99
#13	65	70	10	40	7.5		40	60	50	95
#14	85	80	10	10	30		10	10	10	10
#15	40	30	25	35	50	5	15	20	25	100
#16	60	60	75	50	10	0	25	33	15	75
#17	30	50	5	5	10	0	15	70	20	20
#18	80	70	10	15	10	1	5	15	25	24
#19	50	50	25	75	25	5	25	25	15	100
#20	80	80	25	25	25	5	20	50	15	20
#21	75	60	20	25	20	5	5	30	20	25
#22	50	70	25	25	25	5	5	20	20	20
#23	75	60	1	2	1		12.5	10	20	15
#24	60	75	10	30	40	3	15	75	30	25
#25	50	75	25	25	2	5	2	25	5	100
#26	60	40	40	40	30	5	15	20	20	15
#27	90	85	3	2	3	0	20	30	15	2
#28	30	60	25	15	5	0.5	15	40	20	15
#29	80	75	10	20	10	1	33	60	25	50
#30	22.5	25	5	40	50	5	10	30	25	35
% Average	62.85	61.67	19.13	25.87	19.95	3.38	19.82	37.60	21.83	49.83

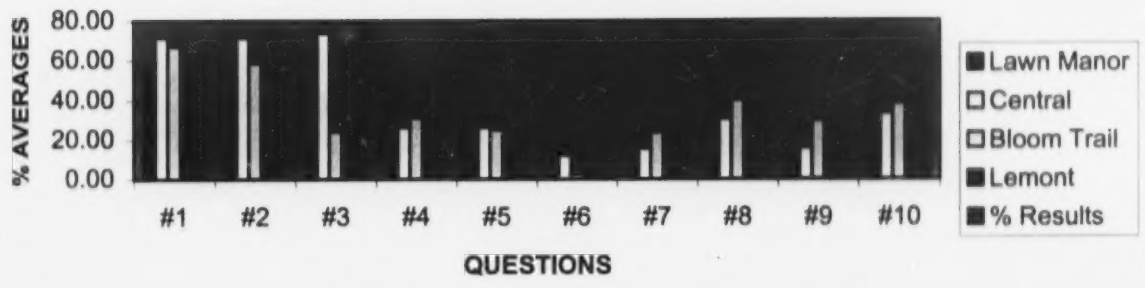
(APPENDIX G)
TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS
BLOOM TRAIL HIGH SCHOOL

Questions:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Teacher #										
# 1	90	60	5	5	5	0	2	5	40	30
# 2	90	80	5	3	5	0	10	30	25	10
# 3	75	75	50	50	60	5	30	60	20	20
# 4	75	50	10	10	5	2	30	40	30	30
# 5	65	40	40	50	75	1	85	70	30	50
# 6	85	75	17.5	12.5	10		25	50	27.5	20
# 7	50	50	25	50	25	10	70	70	50	40
# 8	60	40	20	30	35	1	80	90	60	100
# 9	90	75	5	5	10	0	10	50	30	30
#10	50	60	50	75	90	0	40	40	20	100
#11	50	70	30	30	10	2	50	60	50	30
#12	50	50	15	40	70	0	50	50	60	75
#13	50	25	15	50	10	0	10	20	30	50
#14	95	75	5	5	0.5	0	5	5	10	5
#15	60	50	20	50	25	10	25	40	40	30
#16	60	60	50	50	30	5	40	60	50	100
#17	80	55	7.5	10	17.5	1.5	10	20	10	10
#18	50	20	87	95	15	0	15	75	80	50
#19	70	60	15	15	10		10	10	10	50
#20	92	90	2	10			8	15	15	15
#21	40	20	80	80	50	5	40	70	80	80
#22	80	60	5	50	5	0	5	80	5	5
#23	80	65	5	5	0	0	5	15	15	13
#24	75	60	10	5	2	0	20	50	30	30
#25	80	70	5	10	2	0	0	5	10	2
#26	60	60	17.5	20	5		15	60	15	17.5
#27	75	75	10	10	10	0	20	20	20	90
#28	50	50	50	50	60		25	50	50	50
#29	99	90	0	5	1		20	30	10	10
#30	90	95		1	2	0	1	5	18	4
#31	30	25	5	15	5	0	5	20	17.5	17.5
#32	50	45	1	1	80	21	10	40	10	9
#33	70	70	40	15	15	5	20	30	25	60
#34	80	70	10	10	5	1	1	1	3	2
#35	60	60	30	50	10	10	30	60	40	40
#36	80	90	10	10	0	0	10	10	10	10
#37	70	70	5	10	3	0	20	25	25	90
#38	50	50	75	100	100	0	40	50	40	35
#39	50	50	20	80	30		50	90	60	100
#40	30	10	90	70	90	1	20	50	40	40
% Average	67.15	58.63	24.17	31.06	25.21	2.44	24.05	40.53	30.28	38.75

(APPENDIX H)
SUMMARY OF AVERAGES PER SCHOOL

Question	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
School										
Lawn Manor	54.00	54.00	28.00	41.00	15.40	2.30	22.00	52.00	26.00	58.00
Central	71.47	71.47	73.65	26.41	26.41	12.29	15.82	30.82	16.24	33.65
Bloom Trail	67.15	58.63	24.17	31.06	25.21	2.44	24.05	40.53	30.28	38.75
Lemont	62.85	61.67	19.13	25.87	19.95	3.38	19.82	37.60	21.83	49.83
% Results	63.87	61.44	36.24	31.09	21.74	5.10	20.42	40.24	23.59	45.06

(FIGURE 1) GRAPH SUMMARY OF AVERAGES PER SCHOOL



(APPENDIX I)
POST STUDENT SURVEY

Since you have completed the social skills lessons, do you notice an improvement in the following areas? Circle yes or no after you read each question.

1. Talking out loud during class?	Yes	No
2. Improved concentration in class?	Yes	No
3. Improved learning?	Yes	No
4. Improved relationship with teacher?	Yes	No
5. Classroom rules enforced consistently?	Yes	No
6. Improved relationships with classmates?	Yes	No
7. More respect among students?	Yes	No
8. More respect between teacher and students?	Yes	No
9. School rules enforced consistently?	Yes	No
10. Should human relation skills be an integral part of the curriculum?	Yes	No
11. Would you be willing to take a course to improve your human relation (social) skills?	Yes	No

(APPENDIX J) POST STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

	YES	NO
1. Talking out loud during class?	78%	22%
2. Improved concentration in class?	76%	24%
3. Improved learning?	69%	31%
4. Improved relationship with teacher?	82%	18%
5. Classroom rules enforced consistently?	76%	24%
6. Improved relationships with classmates?	76%	24%
7. More respect among students?	59%	41%
8. More respect between teacher and students?	92%	8%
9. School rules enforced consistently?	86%	8%
10. Should human relation skills be an integral part of the curriculum?	75%	25%
11. Would you be willing to take a course to improve your human relation skills?	76%	24%
Totals	77%	23%